Kristen Gunness

Senior Policy Researcher, RAND Corporation

Kristen Gunness is a senior policy researcher in the RAND Corporation's Washington Office. Her expertise includes military, security, and foreign policy issues in the Indo Pacific region, with a focus on China. She has worked with a range of Department of Defense (DOD) and private sector clients throughout her career and advised senior leaders in U.S. Navy, Office of the Secretary of Defense, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (formerly known as PACOM), and the Intelligence Community. Ms. Gunness has been an adjunct policy analyst at RAND since 2012, where she has worked on numerous projects related to Chinese military developments and their impact on U.S. and DoD interests.

Before joining RAND, Ms. Gunness served as the Director of the Navy Asia Pacific Advisory Group at the Pentagon, where she advised the Chief of Naval Operations on security and foreign policy trends in the Indo-Pacific region with a focus on Chinese naval and gray zone capabilities. Prior to her position on the Navy staff, she was Senior Project Director on Chinese military and security affairs at CNA.

Ms. Gunness holds a BA from Tufts University in International Relations, a certificate in Chinese Studies from the Johns Hopkins SAIS Nanjing Center, and an MA in Security Studies from Georgetown University's Walsh School of Foreign Service.

Ms. Gunness has testified before the Commission twice, including most recently at the 2020 hearing titled "China's Military Power Projection and U.S. National Interests."